

# **Utilization of Community Mental Health Services among Individuals of Arab American Ancestry**

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# Background

- **Wayne State University Project CARE, (Consultation Assessment Research and Evaluation) has been contracted by the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency (DWCCMHA) to:**
  - **assist in the implementation of evidence-based practices**
  - **facilitate performance improvement**

# DWCCMHA and Project CARE

- **Number of individuals receiving services from 10.02 – 4.06, 115,572**
- **As a part of their role, Project CARE assesses the need for services across various population groups to learn if there are disparities in the need for services**

# Purpose

- **The purpose of this study was to examine the need for mental health services across major racial/ethnic groups living in southeastern Michigan**
- **The information will be used by the DWCCMHA and community mental health service providers to inform planning for community mental health services, to guide the implementation of evidence-based practices and to enhance clinical performance improvement**

# Study Objective

- **The objective was to provide a descriptive, analytical assessment of variation in need for and delivery of mental health services across three racial/ethnic groups: Arab Americans, African Americans and Caucasians**

# Specific Aims

- **The specific aims included:**
  - **To provide an assessment of selected demographics of individuals receiving mental health services**
  - **To estimate the prevalence of major mental illnesses across the racial/ethnic subgroups**
  - **To evaluate variations in the delivery of mental health services across racial/ethnic subgroups**

# Arab Americans in southeastern Michigan

- In Wayne County, Michigan, the population of Arab Americans is approximately 300,000
- African American population is 864,627
- Caucasian population is 1,028,984

# **ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services)**

- Key community partner with Project CARE**
- Created in 1971 by a group of volunteers to assist the Arab immigrant population adapt to life in the U.S.**
- Presently, over 90 programs in the following areas:**
  - Employment and training**
  - Social services**
  - Community health and research center**
  - Youth and education**



# Methods/Study Population

- **Data Source – DWWCMHA maintains an administrative database of services delivered and tracking encounters received through the community mental health system**
- **This study included data from 10.02 through 4.06**
- **Wayne State University HIC approval was continuous throughout the study time frame**

# Methods

- **Project CARE has use of the database to develop and refine measurement tools supporting the implementation of evidence-based practices**
- **The database has a field termed ethnicity which may serve as a useful means of stratifying individuals from various backgrounds; however, in 25% of the cases, the data is missing**

# Methods

- **Special procedures were required to define an Arab-American group for the study.**
- **Schwartz and colleagues (2004) developed a tool for identifying Arab-American individuals in large datasets. The tool matches first or/and last names with lists of common names found among individuals of Middle Eastern heritage**

# Procedures

- For this study, individuals in the database were matched with the validated list of Arab American first and names. All individuals who listed their ethnicity as African American were excluded
- The set of individuals of Arab American ancestry were assigned a case number for longitudinal analysis; all identifiers were removed following the matching
- Individual cases from other racial/ethnic groups were included for comparison purposes

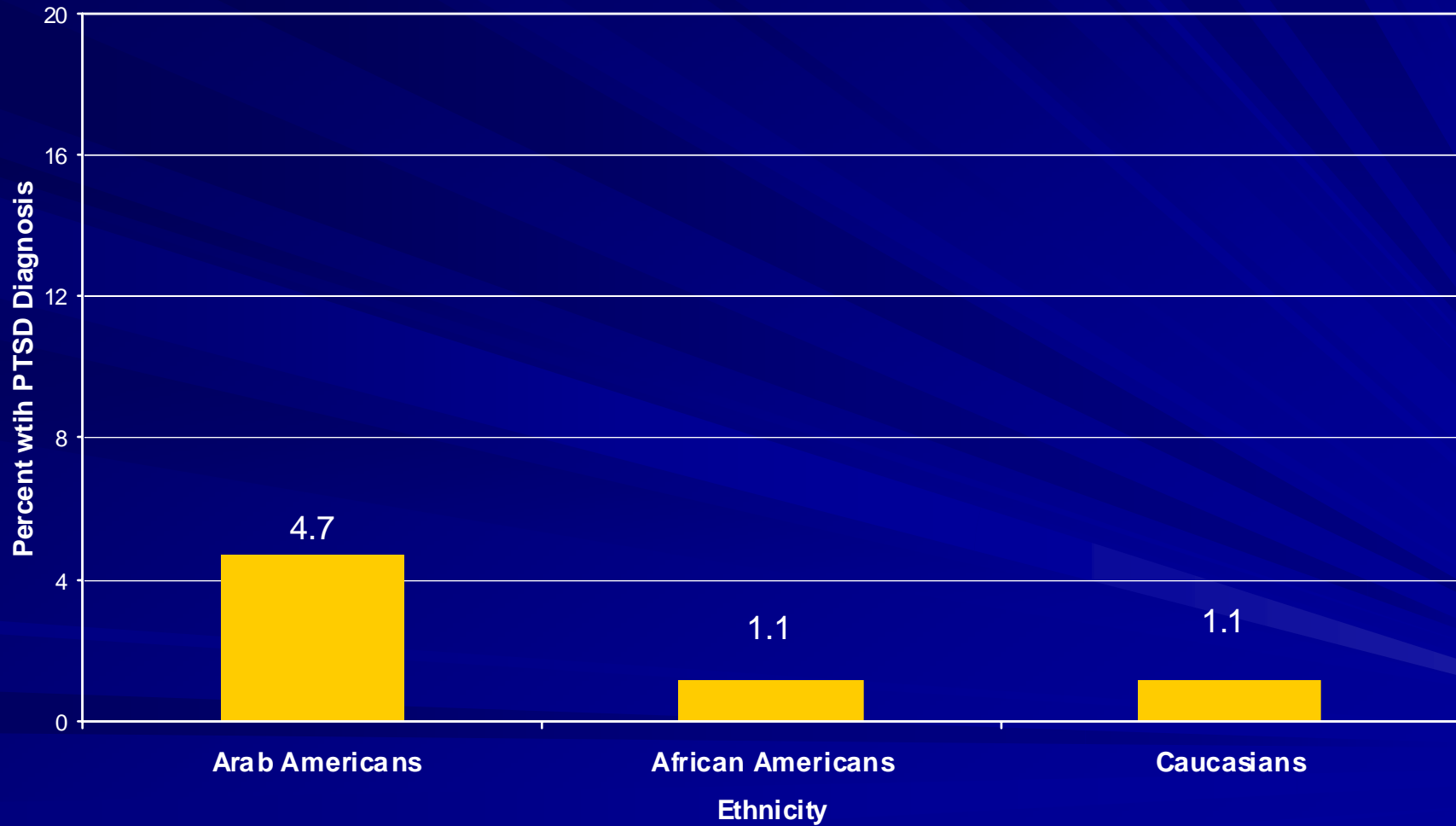
# Data Analysis

- **Using the de-identified data sets for Arab American, African American and Caucasians, the analysis included:**
  - **Distribution of major mental illness diagnoses and proportional distributions of schizophrenia, major depression and substance abuse**
  - **Crude estimates of the prevalence of severe mental illness using 2000 census data**
  - **Estimates of the utilization of community mental health services**

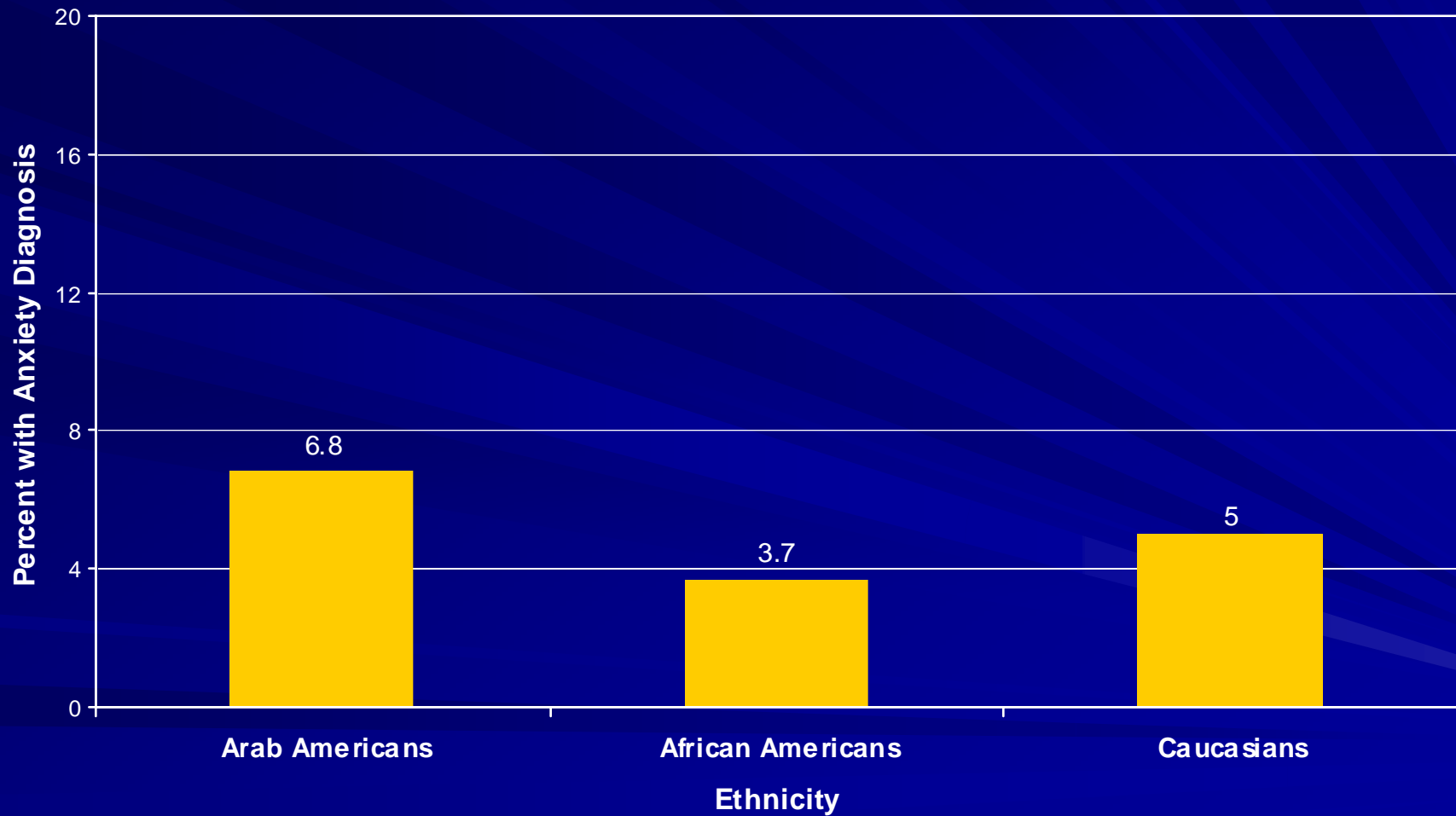
# Findings

- Among the approximately 115,572 cases in the database with at least one claim for mental health services, a total of 3,693 (3.2%) individuals were identified as individuals of Arab American ethnicity
- Prior to applying the method from Schwartz et al., 2004, the database indicated only 814 (<1%) of Arab American ethnicity

# Findings - PTSD

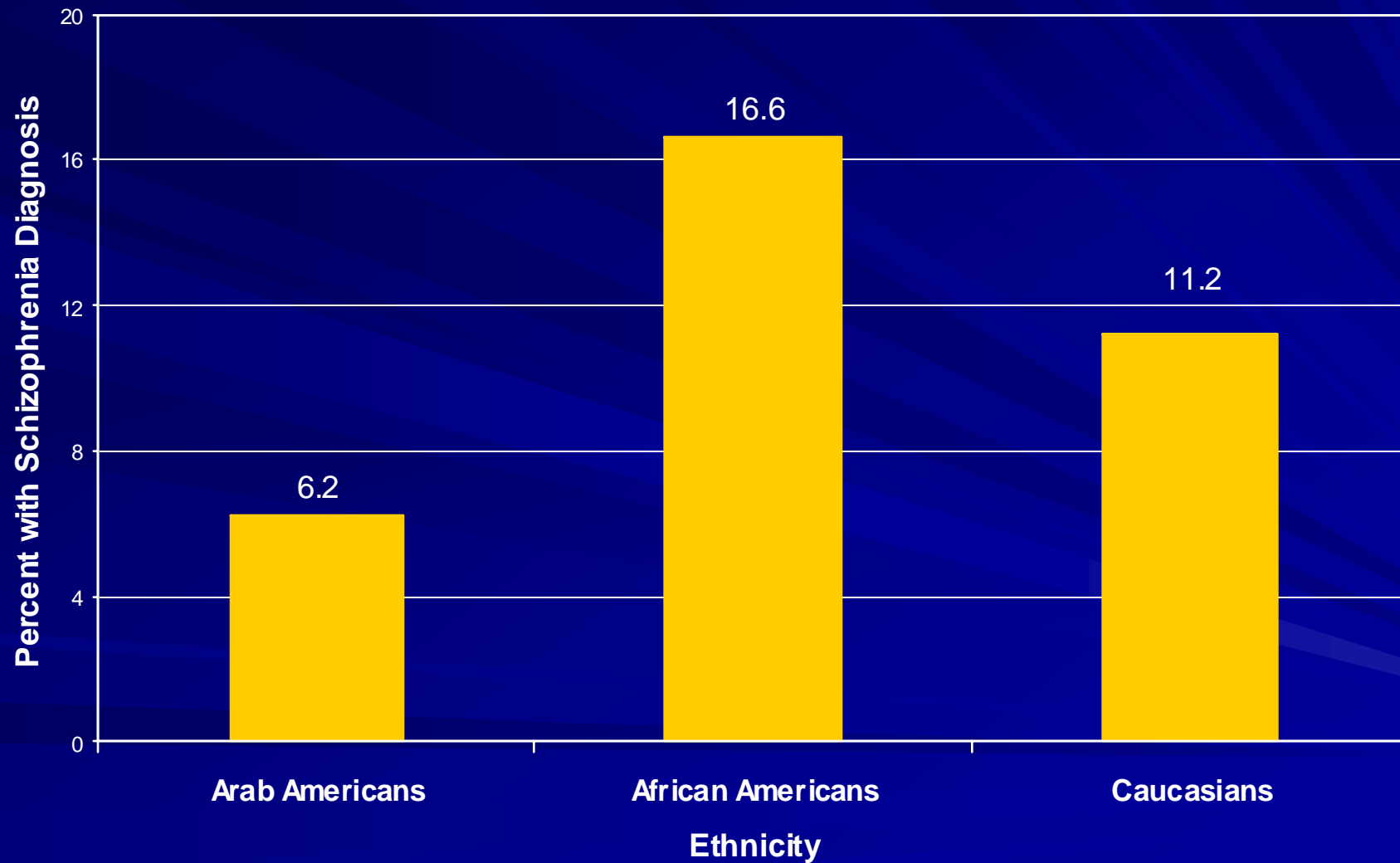


# Findings - Anxiety

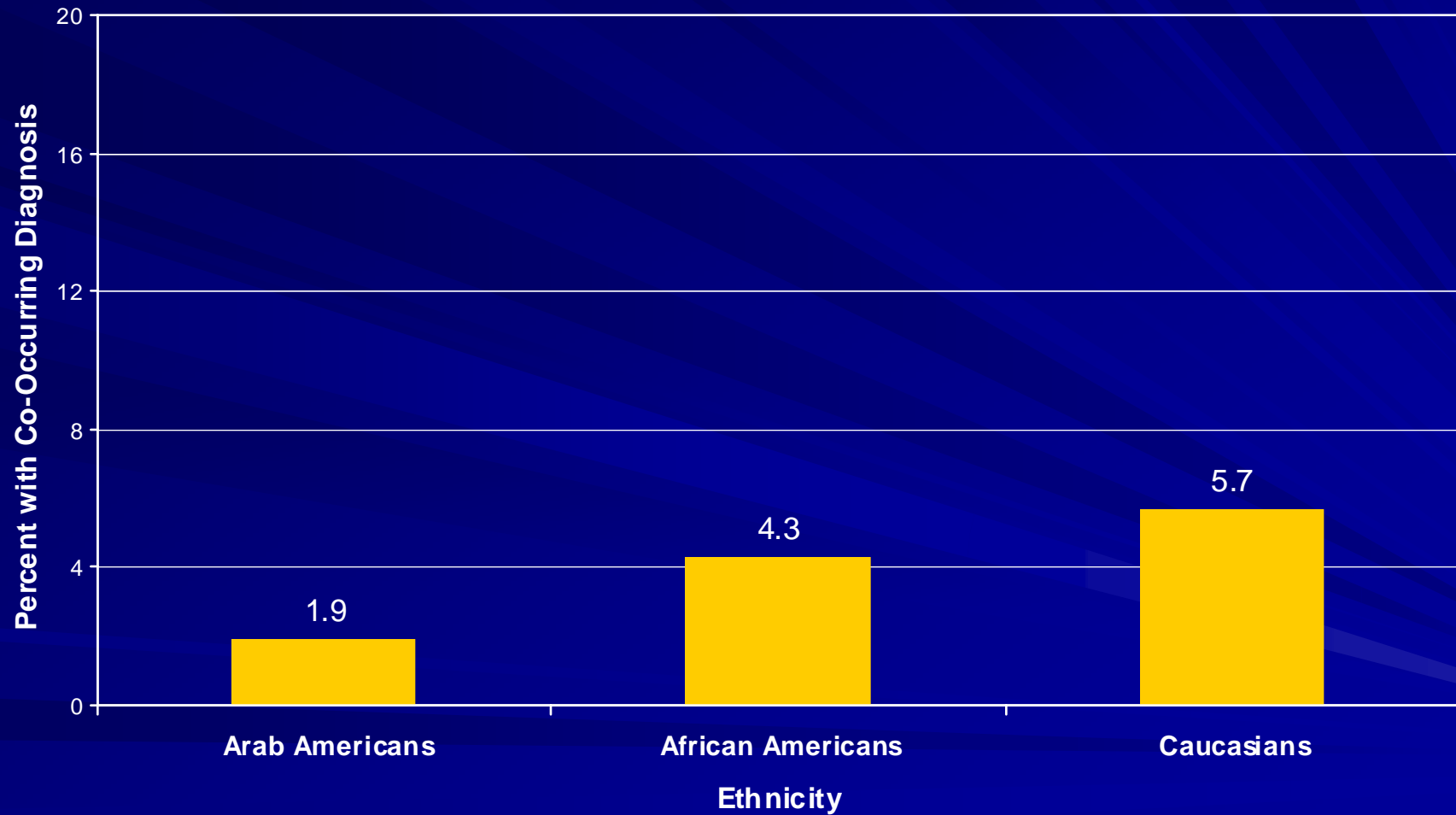




# Findings – Schizophrenia



# Findings – Co-Occurring Disorders



# Study Limitations

- **Challenges common to using large administrative databases for health services research:**
  - **Missing data was of particular concern to our study**
  - **Inability to track individuals over time to assess service utilization and outcomes**

# Implications for service delivery

- **Creates the opportunity to work closely with our community partners to increase awareness, identification and referral**
- **Demands a focused effort to develop and/or expand our community-based networks to reach those organizations serving individuals of Arab American ancestry**
- **Calls for immediate efforts to increase awareness among community mental health services providers to ensure appropriate referral and follow up**